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**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, ex rel.**

**STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION**

**CASE NO. PUC990207**

**Ex Parte: In re: Petition for  
Approval of NPA Relief Plan  
For the 540 area code**

**HEARING EXAMINER'S RULING**

**January 7, 2000**

On November 2, 1999, the North American Numbering Plan Administrator ("NANPA"), on behalf of the Virginia telecommunications industry ("Industry"), filed a Petition requesting that the Commission order a plan of relief for the 540 Numbering Plan Area ("NPA") before the end of the first quarter of 2000. On December 29, 1999, the Commission entered an Order Assigning Hearing Examiner, in which the Commission: (i) docketed the matter, (ii) assigned a Hearing Examiner, (iii) directed the Examiner to schedule hearings to receive public comments within the area served by the 540 area code, and (iv) ordered the Examiner to direct the Commission's Division of Communications to publish newspaper notice about the time and place of the public hearings and the address and docket number to which written comments may be sent.

Upon consideration of the Petition and the Commission's order of December 29, 1999, I find that local hearings should be scheduled to receive public comments in this investigation. Further, a procedural schedule should be established for the provision of public notice, the filing of written comments, and receiving evidence. Accordingly,

**IT IS DIRECTED THAT:**

(1) Local hearings to receive public comments on a plan of relief for the 540 NPA are hereby scheduled for 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on February 23, 2000, in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room at the Roanoke County Administration Center, 5204 Bernard Drive, Roanoke, VA 24018; 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on February 24, 2000, at the Abingdon General District Court, 191 East Main Street, Abingdon, VA 24210; 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on February 29, 2000, in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room at the Rockingham County Administration Center, 20 East Gay Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; and 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on March 1, 2000, at the Front Royal Town Hall, 16 North Royal Avenue, Front Royal, VA 22630;

(2) A public hearing shall be held on March 22, 2000, commencing at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission's Second Floor Courtroom for the purpose of receiving any additional public comments, evidence, and oral arguments concerning a plan of relief for the 540 NPA;

(3) Any person desiring to comment in writing, or prefile any written direct testimony or exhibits on a plan of relief for the 540 NPA may do so by directing such comments on or before February 23, 2000, to Joel H. Peck, Clerk, Virginia State Corporation Commission, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, VA 23216, and refer to Case No. PUC990207.

(4) On or before February 2, 2000, the Commission's Division of Communications shall publish once a week for two consecutive weeks the following notice as display advertising (not classified) in newspapers of general circulation within the existing 540 area code:

**VIRGINIA STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION NOTICE  
OF PUBLIC HEARING AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT  
ON THE APPROPRIATE MANNER TO IMPLEMENT A NEW  
AREA CODE IN THE EXISTING 540 AREA CODE  
CASE NO. PUC990207**

The Virginia State Corporation Commission ("SCC") is inviting comments from telephone customers affected by calling into or out of the existing 540 area code. Pursuant to the provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, 47 U.S.C. § 251(e)(1), and the authority delegated by the Federal Communications Commission, the SCC was granted the authority to determine the best method of assigning a new area code to those geographic areas where the available telephone numbers are being depleted.

The area in Virginia currently served by area code 540 will likely run out of telephone numbers as early as the third quarter of 2001. The North American Numbering Plan Administrator has studied the implementation of a new area code in this area and has proposed that the Commission adopt one of four options, namely: (1) overlaying a new area code on top of the existing 540 area code, (2) geographically splitting the existing 540 area code between Staunton and Harrisonburg and assigning a new area code to customers in one of those two areas, (3) geographically splitting the existing 540 area code near Roanoke and assigning a new area code to customers in one of those two areas, and (4) geographically splitting the existing 540 area code near Potts Creek, Eagle Rock, Natural Bridge and Glasgow and assigning a new area code to customers in one of those two areas. Those who may be affected by the proposed area code change are invited to submit written comments on which option they favor to Joel H. Peck, Clerk of the Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218. Any such comments filed with the SCC must refer to Case No. PUC990207 and must be filed no later than February 23, 2000.

Local hearings to receive public comments on the assignment of a new area code in the 540 area have also been scheduled at the following locations and times:

February 23, 2000 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.  
Board of Supervisors Meeting Room  
Roanoke County Administration Center  
5204 Bernard Drive  
Roanoke, VA 24018

February 24, 2000 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.  
Abingdon General District Court  
191 East Main Street  
Abingdon, VA 24210

February 29, 2000 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.  
Board of Supervisors Meeting Room  
Rockingham County Administration Center  
20 East Gay Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

March 1, 2000 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.  
Front Royal Town Hall  
16 North Royal Avenue  
Front Royal, VA 22630

Persons wishing to speak at the hearings need only attend one of the hearings and provide their name and address to the Commission's bailiff.

A public hearing on the assignment of a new area code in the 540 area is scheduled for March 22, 2000, at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission's second floor courtroom, located in the Tyler Building at 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia. Persons desiring to make a statement at the hearing need only appear in the Commission's second floor courtroom at 9:45 a.m. on the day of the hearing and identify themselves as public witnesses to the Commission's bailiff.

#### **VIRGINIA STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION**

(5) On or before February 23, 2000, the Commission's Division of Communications shall provide proof of public notice by newspaper publication in the manner described herein; and

(6) On or before March 10, 2000, the Commission's Division of Communications may file a report and recommendation regarding a plan of relief for the 540 NPA.

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Alexander F. Skirpan, Jr.  
Hearing Examiner